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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ANTANANARIVO 000707

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SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: FRAGILE POWER-SHARING DEAL REACHED AT  
ICG-M

REF: A. ANTANANARIVO 701  
[1](#)B. ANTANANARIVO 618

Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Following de facto transition leader Andry Rajoelina's announcement Oct 4 that he agreed to replace his prime minister Monja Roindefo with a consensus candidate to form a unity government, high-level officials attending the third international contact group meeting on Madagascar (ICG-M) pressured Roindefo to cede his place for the good of the country. AU Commissioner Jean Ping then led the charge to convince the representatives of the nation's four vying political factions that they must agree on a replacement. Following high-level French intervention, a name acceptable to all four movements was found. The elation felt over this breakthrough was short-lived however as it became clear that the next stumbling block would be over who held the post of transition president. Although the Ravalomanana movement's demands that either Rajoelina be replaced or that he agree not to run in the next election were noted, the ICG, urged by France, the AU, and SADC Mediator Chissano, concluded that consensus had been reached on the top three posts of a unity transition government, with the caveat that another offshore meeting of the leaders of the four movements would be arranged as soon as possible to concretize the fragile verbal agreements of the four delegations and iron out the remaining "details". Ravalomanana declared the following day that he would never recognize Rajoelina as transition president, but it remains to be seen if he will pull out of the mediation -- and power-sharing -- process. A consensus transition government without the notional approval or acquiescence of the ousted president could face serious challenges implementing the objectives of the Maputo transition charter; however, Ravalomanana's business and political interests here may be compelling enough to keep him in the fold. End summary.

AU Convenes High-Level ICG in Madagascar

[1](#)2. (U) The African Union convened the third international contact group meeting on Madagascar (ICG-M) in Antananarivo Oct 6. Although pro-HAT groups had threatened to block the mediators' arrival at the airport following SADC's recent move to stop HAT leader Rajoelina from speaking at the UNGA, security was ensured by the HAT, which even went so far as to break up a small gathering of peaceful protesters outside the meeting venue on Oct 6 by firing tear gas to disperse the

approximately 100 people. The local nature of the event significantly altered the dynamic compared to the previous ICG-M's held in Addis. Discussions were heated and not particularly diplomatic. The meeting, presided over by AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, was attended by mediators from the AU, SADC, the UN, and the OIF, as well as representatives from the Indian Ocean Commission, the EU, Libya, the five permanent members of the Security Council, and Japan as an observer. Ambassador Phillip Carter led the US delegation; other high-ranking officials included French Minister of Cooperation Alain Joyandet, Swedish EU Presidency Ambassador Lena Sundh, and former Mozambican President and lead mediator Joachim Chissano. These high-level officials, with a forceful Jean Ping at the helm, successfully pressured Madagascar's main political rivals to reach consensus on several key points that could lead to the implementation of a unity transition government, although much work remains to be done.

#### Monja's Humiliating Withdrawal

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13. (C) After attending diplomats had been briefed by the mediators on events since the second ICG July 22 in Addis Ababa, the delegations expressed their support for the mediators and the continuation of negotiations to achieve a consensual, inclusive transition government that could prepare credible elections within the next 13 months. All agreed that implementation of the Maputo transition charter and other accords signed in Mozambique by the leaders of the four political movements August 9 was the only way forward out of the nation's political crisis. The meeting then took an unusual turn when Ambassador Carter urged AU Envoy

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Ouedraogo to invite the four delegations into the room together for an interactive session with the ICG members. Initially Ouedraogo rejected Carter's recommendation, but other ICG members chimed in, as did Commissioner Ping, leading to a brief scuffle between Ouedraogo and Ping on whether the delegations would be invited in single file or all at once. Ping prevailed, and the four delegation leaders were seated at the main table, including Rajoelina's representative, Ny Hasina Andriamanjato (vice PM in charge of foreign affairs). Shortly thereafter, Rajoelina's prime minister Monja Roindefo -- whom Rajoelina had promised the international community he would replace with a consensus candidate (ref A) -- took Ny Hasina's seat. Following Monja's appeal to the ICG that it should consider the political stability and the "reality on the ground", rather than just the terms of Maputo, which he claimed were unclear, he was squarely told by President Chissano, Commissioner Ping, Minister Joyandet, Ambassador Carter, and Ambassador Sundh that he must cede his place to a consensus prime minister in order to resolve the political crisis. Soon after this humiliating exchange, Ny Hasina provided a letter to Ping from Rajoelina explaining that Ny Hasina, not Monja, was his movement's representative. Monja promptly departed and was replaced by Ny Hasina, who stressed his movement's willingness to implement the Maputo accords, including replacing Monja with a consensus prime minister.

#### All Agree on Consensus Prime Minister

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14. (C) The mediators explained that, during the second round of talks in Maputo, there was a consensus that Rajoelina would retain the presidency of the unity transition government, Ratsiraka would name a consensus prime minister, and Zafy would name the vice president. (Note: All of the movements except that of ousted President Ravalomanana had agreed to this plan. Ravalomanana had agreed in general to the schema, but had objected strongly to Rajoelina personally retaining the transition presidency (ref B). End note.) Prior to the ICG meeting, Ratsiraka had provided three names for consideration, which were all rejected because of affiliation or ethnicity. During the ICG, the French reached Ratsiraka by phone and offered him a ten-minute meeting with

President Sarkozy if he agreed to give more names. During the lunch break, Chissano discussed these names with the four delegations, who agreed that Professor Eugene Mangalaza, former IV program participant and former Rector of Tamatave University living in exile since 2002, was acceptable as prime minister. Zafy named his delegation leader Dr. Emmanuel Rakotovahiny as vice president.

. . . But Not on the President

15. (C) Although the agreement on the prime minister was a major breakthrough, the victory was short-lived. The Ravalomanana delegation made it clear that they had never agreed to Rajoelina personally occupying the transition presidency and would not accept such an arrangement. They later softened their tone and agreed to accept him if he agreed that he would not run for president in the elections to be organized in the coming year, but threatened to pull out of the process altogether if their objections were ignored. The mediators responded by explaining that the question of who could run for president had already been raised and resolved during the first round of discussions in Maputo, that all four movements had agreed that only members of the transition government (which, in the French system, does not include the president) would be barred from running, and that even though the AU has a general principle that coup leaders should not be able to run in an election they organize, that principle did not apply in this case as the political leaders had agreed otherwise in writing. Ny Hasina added that (the 35-year old) Rajoelina had not yet decided even if he intended to run and that the population would have to decide on his eligibility when they determined the terms of the new constitution to be approved by referendum (including lower age limits).

Deal or No Deal?: International Community Divided

16. (C) In the final closed door session of the ICG, without

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the Malagasy delegations, there was heated debate on whether or not Ravalomanana could be forced to go along with the schema, and if he did not, whether or not any "consensus" which did not include the democratically-elected president, who maintains a reasonable-sized following (and significant financial resources), was truly a viable one. The French argued that three out of four movements was a consensus and that the ICG should announce the formation of a new government as a fait accompli and move forward. The door would remain open to Ravalomanana's movement to join later if they chose to do so, Joyandet argued, reflecting a term in the Maputo agreement. The EU and UK Ambassadors both then raised concerns that the international community should not oversell the agreement that had been reached in the final communique as a consensus that definitively determined the leaders of the transition, as they could then be embarrassed later in the press when the Ravalomanana movement rejected the agreements and perhaps pulled out of the negotiations entirely. The UK Ambassador further noted that any transition government without the participation of Ravalomanana's representatives (he agreed in Maputo that he would not personally participate) would not be viewed as inclusive, as it would exclude the elected president. Ambassador Carter subsequently intervened to say that, without Ravalomanana's participation, any unity government would likely fail to resolve the political crisis as his supporters would not accept it. Ambassador Carter urged that another last-ditch effort be made to bring Ravalomanana on board. Ambassadors Carter, Marquardt, and others then attempted to reach Ravalomanana by phone, but clearly he was not taking any calls.

17. (C) Eventually, after 14 grueling hours, it was agreed that the names of the transition president, vice president, and prime minister would be publicized, along with an explanation of the Ravalomanana movement's "strong objection"

to Rajoelina being able to run for president. Then, Chissano received a call from Ratsiraka, who argued that Ravalomanana must be part of the solution and called on the mediators to organize another offshore meeting of the movement leaders (Rajoelina, Ratsiraka, Zafy, and Ravalomanana) to seek to reach agreement on pending issues. Chissano agreed to do this as soon as possible to seek written confirmation by the four leaders of the tenuous agreement made by their delegations during the ICG. Today, Ravalomanana issued a declaration stating that he would never accept a putschist as the head of the transition, as that would provide a poor example for all of Africa.

Comment: A Difficult Road to Hoe

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18. (C) Ravalomanana's anti-putschist argument resonates, but it got no traction yesterday precisely because he already had lost it two months ago in Maputo: even those -- like the US, EU, and UK -- who strongly sympathized with the principle at stake had to agree that Ravalomanana was attempting to re-open issues closed in an agreement he had signed and whose implementation was the object of this meeting. (Indeed, one of his closest advisors admitted to Ambassadors Marquardt and Carter that they had "made a big mistake in Maputo.") The agreement reached on a consensus prime minister was an important breakthrough towards the implementation of a unity government that can organize credible elections, but the question of the presidency has now risen to the fore. It remains to be seen if the mediators' plan to persuade Ravalomanana to accept Rajoelina will succeed in unblocking the way for the formation of a truly inclusive transition government, or if it will backfire, causing Ravalomanana to pull out of negotiations entirely. In a side bar discussion, Carter offered USG assistance to Chissano, stating that AF leadership would be willing to meet with Ravalomanana in South Africa if that would help Chissano's mediation efforts. Chissano said he appreciated the offer and would look to see if US pressure on Ravalomanana would be needed. Alternatively, it is not to be excluded that Rajoelina might agree not to run, which would surely be welcomed by the ICG. The resolution of this not-so-small detail will no doubt prove difficult, but perhaps Ravalomanana's desire to protect his business interests will be enough to keep him in the fold. End comment.

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MARQUARDT